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**Chris Grove**  
*Executive Director*

**7 February 2025****TO:**

**Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli**  
Prime Minister of Nepal

**Mr. Ramesh Lekhak**  
Home Minister of Nepal

**Subject: Urgent Appeal to Halt Pathibhara  
Cable Car Project and Address Human Rights  
Concerns****Dear Excellencies:**

We write to you on behalf of ESCR-Net - International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, a global network of more than 300 non-governmental organizations, grassroots movements, human rights defenders, legal experts, and academics who work to promote and protect economic, social and environmental justice through human rights. We also write in solidarity with our fellow member, The Human Rights Awareness Center, who works tirelessly in support of the struggle of Indigenous Peoples and human rights across Nepal. We write to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing developments related to the Pathibhara cable car project in Taplejung district. The construction of the cable car has led to significant unrest among local communities, particularly the Indigenous Limbu People, who hold the Pathibhara area—referred to as Mukkumlung in their Mundhum tradition—as a sacred site.

The project's advancement raises [serious concerns](#) about potential violations of economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as environmental degradation due to deforestation. Moreover, the project has moved forward without securing the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of the Indigenous Limbu community, violating their right to self-determination and undermining their ability to protect their ancestral land.



On January 25, 2025, a confrontation between protesters and security personnel resulted in [injuries](#) to several individuals, including two protesters who sustained gunshot wounds. This incident underscores the escalating tensions and the urgent need for a peaceful resolution.

**In light of these developments, we respectfully urge the Government of Nepal to:**

- Immediately halt the construction of the Pathibhara cable car project to allow for comprehensive consultations with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169<sup>1</sup> and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Articles 10, 19, and 25)<sup>2</sup>, which the State of Nepal is obligated to uphold.
- Withdraw the heavy security presence deployed in the area to de-escalate tensions and foster a conducive environment for dialogue. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Articles 6 and 21)<sup>3</sup>, to which Nepal is a State Party, guarantees the right to life and the right to peaceful assembly, both of which have been threatened by the militarized response to protests.
- Conduct an independent and transparent investigation into the events of January 25, 2025, ensuring accountability for the excessive use of force, in accordance with United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990)<sup>4</sup>, which mandate that force may be used only when strictly necessary and must be proportional. The Convention Against Torture (CAT) (Article 12)<sup>5</sup>, ratified by Nepal, also requires prompt, impartial, and effective investigations into allegations of excessive force.
- Release individuals who have been reportedly falsely accused and/or unlawfully arrested in connection with the protests. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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<sup>1</sup> ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, ratified by Nepal in 2007.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 2007.

<sup>3</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Nepal in 1991.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Convention Against Torture (CAT), ratified by Nepal in 1991.



(UDHR) (Article 9)<sup>6</sup> and ICCPR (Article 9)<sup>7</sup> prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, emphasizing the need for due process and humane treatment of detainees.

We emphasize that Nepal, as a party to the above international treaties, has a legal and moral obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. The ongoing violence and displacement caused by the Pathibhara cable car project not only contravene these obligations but also set a bad precedent for Indigenous rights and environmental justice in the country.

We urge your government to take immediate action to address these concerns and engage in a genuine dialogue with the Limbu People and other affected communities to ensure that development projects do not come at the cost of human rights.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

**Chris Grove**

Executive Director, on behalf of the member organizations of ESCR-Net (listed below):

1. Above Ground - Canada
2. Accountability Counsel - United States
3. Action Contre l'Impunité pour les Droits Humains - Democratic Republic of the Congo
4. Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel - Israel
5. Advocates for International Development - United Kingdom
6. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies - Gambia
7. African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA) - South Africa
8. African Indigenous Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development - Nigeria
9. African Resources Watch (AfreWatch) - Democratic Republic of the Congo
10. Al-Haq - Palestine

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<sup>6</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948.

<sup>7</sup> ICCPR, Article 9 on arbitrary detention and due process.



11. Alliance for Rural Democracy - Liberia
12. Al Marsad - Golan Heights - Syria
13. Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights - Palestine
14. Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (ALTSEAN Burma) - Thailand
15. Amnesty International - United Kingdom
16. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) - Lebanon
17. Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) - Thailand
18. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) - Thailand
19. Asian Peoples' Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD) - Philippines
20. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) - Thailand
21. Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ) - Argentina
22. ASOCIACIÓN DE MUJERES MERETRICES DE ARGENTINA (AMMAR) - Argentina
23. Asociación La Ruta del Clima (LRC) - Costa Rica
24. Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las Víctimas de la Violencia en las Veraces, Maya Achi (ADIVIMA) - Guatemala
25. Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH) - Peru
26. Asociación Q'ukumatz - Guatemala
27. Association des Amoureux du Livre pour le Développement Local (ASSOAL) - Cameroon
28. Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE) - North Macedonia
29. Association for Law and Advocacy for Pastoralists (ALAPA) - Tanzania
30. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) - Canada
31. Association Nigérienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (ANDDH) - Niger
32. Association of Environmental Lawyers of Liberia (Green Advocates) - Liberia
33. Association tunisienne des femmes démocrates (ATFD) - Tunisia
34. Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) - Belgium
35. AWAJ Foundation - Bangladesh
36. Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) - Bangladesh
37. Baobab for Women's Human Rights - Nigeria
38. Bisan Center - Palestine
39. Botswana Khwedom Council - Botswana
40. Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation - Bulgaria
41. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) - Egypt



42. Center for Constitutional Rights - United States
43. Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) - United States
44. Center for Human Rights and Development - Rwanda - Rwanda
45. Center for Human Rights and Environment (CHRE) - United States
46. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) - United States
47. Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) - United States
48. Center for Trade Union and Human Rights, Inc (CTUHR) - Philippines
49. Center for Transnational Environmental Accountability (CTEA) - China
50. Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) | Rutgers University - United States
51. Centre de Recherche sur l'Environnement, la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (CREDDHO) - Democratic Republic of the Congo
52. Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs) - South Africa
53. Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) - Montenegro
54. Centre for Economic Social Cultural Rights in Africa (CESCRA) - Uganda
55. Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) - Canada
56. Centre for Human Rights and Development - Mongolia - Mongolia
57. Centre for Peace Studies - Croatia
58. Centre for the Sustainable Use of Natural and Social Resources (CSNR) - India
59. Centro de Archivos y Acceso a la Información Pública (CAinfo) - Uruguay
60. Centro de Derechos Económicos y Sociales - Ecuador
61. Centro de Derechos Humanos | Universidad Diego Portales - Chile
62. Centro de Derechos y Desarrollo (CEDAL) - Peru
63. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) - Argentina
64. Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA) - Mexico
65. Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL) - United States
66. Charter Committee on Poverty Issues - Canada
67. Chiadzwa Community Development Trust (CCDT) - Zimbabwe
68. Child Rights International Network (CRIN) - United Kingdom
69. Citizen News Service (CNS) - India
70. Clínica de litigio estratégico de derechos humanos (Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, de la Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo) (CLEDH) - Mexico
71. Colectiva Feminista - Puerto Rico
72. Collectif des Femmes du Mali (COFEM) - Mali
73. Collective for Research & Training on Development - Action (CRTD.A) - Lebanon



74. Comisión Colombiana de Juristas - Colombia
75. Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CMDPDH) - Mexico
76. Comité Ambiental en Defensa de la Vida - Colombia
77. Conectas Direitos Humanos - Brazil
78. Confederación Campesina del Perú (CCP) - Peru
79. Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH) - Honduras
80. Consejo de Pueblos Wuxhtaj - Guatemala
81. Construisons Ensemble le Monde (ONG CEM) - Democratic Republic of the Congo
82. Coordinadora Andina de Organizaciones Indígenas (CAOI) - Peru
83. Corporación Colectivo de Abogados José Alvear Restrepo (CAJAR) - Colombia
84. Corporate Accountability - United States
85. Corporate Responsibility Coalition (CORE) - United Kingdom
86. Defend Job Philippines - Philippines
87. Dejusticia – Centro de Estudios de Derecho, Justicia y Sociedad - Colombia
88. Democracy and Workers' Rights Center in Palestine (DWRC) - Palestine
89. Democracy Center (The) - United States
90. Desarrollo, Educación y Cultura Autogestionarios Equipo Pueblo A.C. - Mexico
91. Dibeem Association for Environmental Development - Jordan
92. Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF) - United States
93. Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) - South Africa
94. EarthRights International - United States
95. East African Centre for Human Rights - Kenya
96. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Asia - Philippines
97. Economic and Social Rights Academic Network — UK-Ireland - United Kingdom
98. Economic and Social Rights Centre — Hakijamii - Kenya
99. Economic Justice for Women Projec - Zimbabwe
100. Egyptian Association for Collective Rights - Egypt
101. Egyptian Center for Civil and Legislative Reform - Egypt
102. Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights - Egypt
103. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms - Egypt
104. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights - Egypt



105. Ekta Parishad - India
106. Endorois Indigenous Women Network - Kenya
107. Endorois Welfare Council - Kenya
108. End Water Poverty - United Kingdom
109. Environmental Defender Law Center - United States
110. Equis: Justicia para las Mujeres - Mexico
111. Equitable Cambodia - Cambodia
112. Escuela Nacional Sindical - Colombia
113. Estudio para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer - Peru
114. European Anti Poverty Network - Belgium
115. European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights - Germany
116. European Roma Rights Centre - Hungary
117. Federação dos Orgãos de Assistencia Social e Educacional - Brazil
118. Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme (FIDH) - France
119. Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya - Kenya
120. Femmes Côte d'Ivoire Expérience - Ivory Coast
121. FIAN International - Food First Information and Action Network Organization - Germany
122. Forest Peoples' Programme - United Kingdom
123. Foro Ciudadano de Participación por la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos - Argentina
124. Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux - Tunisia
125. Foundation for the Conservation of the Earth - Nigeria
126. Foundation of Medical Law and Bioethics - Serbia
127. Franciscans International - Switzerland
128. Front Line Defenders - The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders - Ireland
129. Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho – FESPAD - El Salvador
130. Fundación Etnica Integral - Bolivia
131. Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (FUNDEPS) - Argentina
132. Fundacion Promocion Humana - Argentina
133. Fundar - Centro de Análisis e Investigación - Mexico
134. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association - Georgia
135. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) - United States



136. GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation - South Korea
137. Habitat International Coalition - Egypt
138. Harvard Law School Project on Disability - United States
139. Housing and Land Rights Network - India
140. Human Dignity - Switzerland
141. Human Rights Action - Montenegro
142. Human Rights Awareness Center (HRAC) - Russia
143. Human Rights Law Centre - Australia
144. Human Rights Law Network - India
145. Inclusive Development International - United States
146. Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) - Philippines
147. Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos  
(IM-Defensoras) - Mexico
148. Initiative A 11 - Serbia
149. Initiative for Social and Economic Rights - Uganda
150. Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa - The Gambia
151. Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti - United States
152. Instituto de Estudios Legales y Sociales del Uruguay - Uruguay
153. Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral - Bolivia
154. Instituto de Liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir - Mexico
155. Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos - Colombia
156. Instituto Pólis - Brazil
157. Institut Prometheus pour la Démocratie et les Droits Humains - Morocco
158. Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense - United States
159. International Accountability Project - United States
160. International Center for Ethnic Studies - Sri Lanka
161. International Commission of Jurists - Switzerland
162. International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific - Malaysia
163. Jus Semper Global Alliance - United States
164. Just Associates - United States
165. Just Fair - United Kingdom
166. Justiça Global - Brazil
167. Justice Pour Tous - Democratic Republic of the Congo
168. Justicia Nos Trilhos - Brazil





169. Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice - United States
170. Karapatan - Philippines
171. Kebetkache Women Development & Resource Centre - Nigeria
172. Kenya Human Rights Commission - Kenya
173. Kenya Land Alliance - Kenya
174. Kituo Cha Sheria - Legal Advice Centre - Kenya
175. Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Center - Nigeria
176. Law and Society Trust - Sri Lanka
177. Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights - Serbia
178. Legal Resources Centre (LRC) - South Africa - South Africa
179. Legal Resources Centre - Ghana - Ghana
180. Le Réseau Marocain de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire (REMESS) - Morocco
181. Lok Shakti Abhiyan - India
182. Maison des Droits de l'Homme du Cameroun - Cameroon
183. Manushya Foundation - Thailand
184. MENAFEM - Morocco
185. MINBYUN—Lawyers for a Democratic Society - South Korea
186. Mines, Minerals & People - India
187. MiningWatch Canada - Canada
188. Minority Rights Group International - United Kingdom
189. Movement Alliance Project - United States
190. Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People - Nigeria
191. Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens - Brazil
192. Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) - Brazil
193. Movimiento Nacional CIMARRÓN - Colombia
194. Movimiento Unificado Francisco Sánchez 1932 - El Salvador
195. Muungano Wa Wanavijiji - Kenya
196. Mwatana for Human Rights - Yemen
197. Nairobi Peoples Settlements Network - Kenya
198. Narasha Community Development Group - Kenya
199. National Center for Advocacy Studies - India
200. National Fisheries Solidarity Organization - Sri Lanka
201. National Union of Domestic Employees - Trinidad and Tobago
202. Natural Justice - South Africa
203. Natural Resources Alliance of Kenya - Kenya



204. Natural Resource Women Platform - Liberia
205. Nazdeek - India
206. Network Movement for Justice and Development - Sierra Leone
207. New Woman Foundation - Egypt
208. Občan, demokracia a zodpovednosť (Citizen, Democracy and Accountability) - Slovakia
209. Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme - Republic of the Congo
210. Observatoire de la Societe Civile Congolaise pour les Minerais de Paix - Democratic Republic of the Congo
211. Observatori DESC - Spain
212. Observatorio Ciudadano - Chile
213. Observatorio de Política Social y Derechos Humanos - Mexico
214. Observatory for Marine and Coastal Governance – Center for Social and Environmental Studies - Uruguay
215. Ogiek Peoples Development Program - Kenya
216. Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture (OMCT) - Switzerland
217. Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH) - Honduras
218. Otros Mundos Chiapas - Mexico
219. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum - Pakistan
220. Pamoja Trust - Kenya
221. Participation and the Practice of Rights - United Kingdom
222. Partners for Dignity and Rights - United States
223. Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre - Ireland
224. Peace Track Initiative - Yemen
225. People's Health Movement - India
226. Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies - Jordan
227. Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (la PAH) - Spain
228. Plataforma DESC España - Spain
229. Plataforma Dhesca Brasil - Brazil
230. Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti - India
231. Programa de Justicia Global y Derechos Humanos - Universidad de los Andes - Colombia
232. Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos - Venezuela
233. Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - India



234. Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy - United States
235. Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER) - Mexico
236. Pro Public – Forum for the Protection of Public Interest - Nepal
237. Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales - Mexico
238. Pueblo Originario Kichwa de Sarayaku - Ecuador
239. Red Chimpu Warmi - Bolivia
240. Red Defensoras/es Indigenas - Nicaragua
241. Red Intercontinental de Promoción para la Economía Social y Solidaria en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (RIPESS LAC) - Latin America and Caribbean
242. Red Internacional de Derechos Humanos - Switzerland
243. Rencontre Pour La Paix Et Les Droits De L'Homme - Republic of the Congo
244. Reyna Trust - India
245. Rights and Accountability in Development - United Kingdom
246. Right to Education Initiative - United Kingdom
247. Right to Water Forum in the Arab Region - Lebanon
248. Sahmakum Teang Thaut - Cambodia
249. Samahan Ng Manggagawang Kaagapy Sa Pag-Unlad - Philippines
250. Samata - India
251. SAPCONE – Turkanapeople Organization - Kenya
252. Section 27 - South Africa
253. Sierra Leone Network on the Right to Food - Sierra Leone
254. Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadoras del Hogar (SINACTRAHO) - Mexico
255. Sindicato Obreros Curtidores de la República Argentina (SOCRA) - Argentina
256. Social Rights Advocacy Centre - Canada
257. Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa - South Africa
258. Spaces for Youth Development and Social Change (Spaces For Change) - Nigeria
259. STAR Kampuchea - Cambodia
260. Sustainable Development Foundation - Thailand
261. Syndicat National Autonome des Personnels de l'Administration Publique - Algeria
262. Syrian Legal Development Program - United Kingdom
263. Tamkeen Fields for Aid - Jordan
264. Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education) - Philippines
265. Terra de Direitos - Brazil



266. Terra Justa - Bolivia
267. The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW) - Malaysia
268. The Blue Club - India
269. The Border Consortium - Thailand
270. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) - Netherlands
271. The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA) - Uganda
272. Tierraviva a los Pueblos Indígenas del Chaco - Paraguay
273. Tlachinollan - Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña - Mexico
274. Unión de Trabajadoras Afrocolombianas del Servicio Doméstico (UTRASD) -  
Colombia
275. United Sisterhood Alliance - Cambodia
276. VILUTHU - Sri Lanka
277. Why Me Women's Rights Organization - Bangladesh
278. Witness - United States
279. Women's Economic Agenda Project - United States
280. Women's Legal Center - South Africa
281. Women's Rehabilitation Center - Nepal
282. Women Action Towards Economic Development - Ghana
283. World Forum of Fisher People - South Africa
284. Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association - Zimbabwe
285. Zimbabwe People's Land Rights Movement - Zimbabwe
286. Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - Zimbabwe